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Herbert Scoville Jr., Arms Expert; Became a Critic of Nuclear Policy

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WASHINGTON, July 30 — Herbert Scoville Jr., an authority in advanced military technologies who helped develop nuclear weapons and then, in the 1960's, became an articulate advocate of arms control, died today. He was 70 years old.

Dr. Scoville, who died at the Georgetown University Hospital, succumbed to cancer, according to the family.

Since 1979, Herbert (Pete) Scoville served as the president of the Arms Control Association, a private organization he had helped found.

Earlier, in Government service, he helped develop nuclear weapons as technical director of the Defense Department's Armed Forces Special Weapons Project from 1948 to 1955. He served as deputy director for research and technology in the Central Intelligence Agency from 1955 to 1963, and then as assistant director for science and technology in the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency until 1969.

Prepared Arms Control Pacts

In the arms control post, he was responsible for developing positions on such matters as the 1963 treaty on a limited nuclear test ban, the 1969 treaty aimed at curbing the spread of nuclear weapons and the strategic arms limitation talks with the Soviet Union.

Since leaving Government service in 1969, he was a ubiquitous figure in the public debate over nuclear disarmament, new technologies in the arms field and United States relations with the Soviet Union concerning nuclear weaponry. A major theme of his work, according to associates, was that the key to nuclear stability lay in negotiations between the superpowers.

A native of New York City and a physical chemist by training, with a Ph.D. from the University of Rochester, Dr. Scoville was responsible for the technical aspects of espionage when he worked for the C.I.A., developing intelligence with satellites and high-flying planes.

Change of Views in C.I.A. Service

At the C.I.A., associates said, he became convinced of the need to control nuclear weaponry. In 1958, he attended an international conference to discuss the possibility of a surprise nuclear attack and later wrote of the "oppressive weight" he and many participants felt about the obligation to do something to prevent the use of weapons that could destroy mankind.

After his stint with the Arms Control Agency, he devoted himself entirely to an effort to disseminate information about nuclear weapons, possible strategies for controlling them and the consequences of failing to do so.

In 1981, when he received the Rockefeller Public Service Award that is administered by Princeton University, he was cited for "mobilizing his energies, his scientific knowledge, and his political insight in an effort to create a public awareness of the importance of arms control to American and international security."

Dr. Scoville, who walked with a set of canes because of arthritis, was a familiar figure on Capitol Hill where his expertise was sought on the whole range of nuclear issues.

He was the author of "Missile Madness," a primer on nuclear war, published in 1970, and of "MX: Prescription for Disaster," in 1981.

In recent years, he took up the Reagan Administration on several issues, notably on whether a nuclear freeze could be verified and on the usefulness of the space-based defense program popularly known as "Star Wars." Dr. Scoville argued that it would be destabilizing and could violate the 1972 Antiballistic Missile Treaty.

Dr. Scoville is survived by his wife, the former Ann Curtiss of McLean, Va., and Taconic, Conn.; three sons, Anthony and Thomas, both of Washington, and Nicholas of Los Angeles, and a daughter, Molly Fitzmaurice of Washington.

The funeral will be private, but there will be a memorial service here sometime in September, according to the family.